

**Senior Service College  
Fellowship Project**

# **CREATING “THE PENTATHLETE: ARE WE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This paper provides an analysis of the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army’s concept for Army Leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – “The Pentathlete.” The paper focuses on the criticality of instilling the skills and attributes of “The Pentathlete” into the Army’s junior officers (Lieutenants – Majors). It examines the nature of the “Pentathlete” concept; its skills and attributes, historical basis, why it is relevant in the Contemporary Operational Environment (COE), why it is necessary to instill elements of the “Pentathlete” into our junior officers, specific institutional, organizational, cultural ideas to accomplish this, the challenges and risks associated with creating such a multi-skilled and multi-faceted officer – especially with regard to junior officers. This paper also provides, in order to provide perspective and comparison, results of a study conducted by the History Department at the US Military Academy which identifies the historical traits of successful combat leaders.

Input is based on three primary sources: (1) discussions, interviews, and written surveys expressing the views and experiences of US Army, Marine Corps, British, and Australian Officers (Infantry, Armor and Special Forces) attending and instructing at the Captain’s Career Course at the Maneuver Center at Fort Benning, Georgia and US Army Majors (all branches) attending Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; (2) Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal - conducted by the Department of History United States Military Academy, 1984; (3) discussions with senior US Army Leaders with service as combat leaders in Iraq or Afghanistan; and (4) the Army Chief of Staff’s concept for “Growing Army Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – The Pentathlete.”

The current Army Chief of Staff, GEN Peter Schoomaker developed his vision for Army Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – “The Pentathlete.” The CSA envisions an Army Leader who is multi-skilled in a variety of complex competencies, many of which typically not associated with traditional warfighting or the warrior ethos. His mandate was to “create, develop, and nurture a different kind of Army leader. A leader who is a competent full spectrum warfighter; a strategic and creative thinker; skilled leader in governance, statesmanship, and diplomacy; who possesses a general awareness of cultures; and a builder of leaders and teams.” The “Pentathlete” also possesses five key attributes: decisive, with integrity and character, rapid, informed decision making amidst uncertainty and confusion; emphatic; dedicated to life-long learning; and an effective communicator. A leader who possesses these skills and attributes will be able to operate and succeed in virtually any situation and environment, specifically the Contemporary Operational Environment (COE). This paper analyzes this concept, its applicability specifically to junior officers, methods to develop “Pentathletes,” and the challenges and risks associated with developing such a multi-faceted officer.

Concerns and open questions include:

- What is the “combat environment” that characterizes operations in the Contemporary Operational Environment (COE), Afghanistan, and Iraq – especially that which is faced by junior officers?
- Is the “combat environment” of Afghanistan and Iraq different from the historical “combat environment” that was the basis of the 1984 West Point study?
- What programs, methods, and techniques has the Army instituted to begin the development of “Pentathletes” at the institutional, organizational and cultural level?
- Are there organizational, institutional, and cultural impediments within the Army which may hinder “Pentathlete” development?
- Are there risks and challenges associated with developing such a multi-faceted, multi-skilled, “Jack-of-all-Trades” officer?

Finally, this paper concludes with ideas, methods and recommendations at the institutional, organizational and cultural level to ensure these traits and characteristics are developed in current and future Army junior officers.

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## CREATING “THE PENTATHLETE:” ARE WE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?

### Introduction

The US Army is undergoing its largest and most significant transformation since the Second World War. Not since General Hans von Seeckt’s efforts with the German Reichswehr in the early 1920s has a military organization so self-consciously set about transforming itself as the US Army is doing today [1]. This transformation includes extensive changes to the Army’s organizational structure, the fielding of new equipment, the creation and dissemination of new doctrine, and the creation of a new guide for defining the desired skills and attributes of future Army leaders. The traditional divisional based organizational structure, that served the Army so well during the previous century, is being replaced by a modular force centered on Brigade Combat Teams. The Army is in the midst of its first major modernization since the late 1970s – early 1980s with the fielding of the STRYKER combat vehicle and incremental fielding of the Future Combat Systems (FCS). Anticipating this new structure and equipment, as well as acknowledging the changing nature of current and projected operations, the Army is in the process of drafting and incorporating new doctrine, such as Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency. Since the Army has always been a “people centered” organization, potentially the most important, least publicized and most difficult transformational change to implement is in the realm of leader development. Recognizing that the contemporary and future operating environment will be very different from the bipolar, European-centric, mostly predictable, conventional high intensity conflict scenario that defined the careers of most mid-level and senior Army officers, and that leaders will require new skills, new competencies, and new attributes to succeed in it, the Secretary of the Army and Army Chief of Staff (CSA) developed their vision for an Army Leader of the 21st Century – The “multi-skilled Pentathlete.”

The development of Army “Pentathletes” is a worthy, albeit lofty goal. In the September 1993 issue of Army Focus magazine, then Army Chief of Staff General Gordon R. Sullivan noted that, “The times we live in are times of profound change...political, ideological, and technical. We must adapt to that change and we must grow” [2]. The desire to create “multi-skilled Pentathletes” is a natural outgrowth of the unique demands of this changing environment. The development of “Pentathletes” will not occur naturally. It will take considerable

commitment, time, intellectual thought, institutional effort, money, and potentially significant institutional, organizational, and cultural, change across the full-breadth the Army.

Although the “Pentathlete” concept does not specify at what level or rank structure leaders are to demonstrate proficiency in these identified skills and attributes, given today’s operational environment, it is critical to a certain degree, that it be applied to junior officers – Lieutenants, Captains, and Majors. Operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq demonstrated the growing importance and influence of junior leaders, not only at the tactical level but the operational and even strategic level. “The lesson being driven home by the American experience in Iraq is that people, not machines, or technology, will be the deciding factor in success or failure. The strategy, doctrine, and organizational structures will provide the framework, but only the men and women executing the American strategy can affect the outcome. In Iraq and in small wars in general, the complexity and irregular nature of the conflict places a premium on small-unit leaders who possess the resourcefulness, initiative, and determination to succeed on a battlefield fraught with uncertainty and where the only certainty is ambiguity” [3]. General Charles Krulak, former Marine Corps Commandant, coined the term “strategic corporal” to describe the phenomenon where the decisions of junior officers and noncommissioned officers project strategic consequences [4]. These statements are an affirmation that it is the squad leaders, platoon sergeants, platoon leaders, company commanders, battalion operations and executive officers, and battalion commanders who are “carrying the fight” in the Contemporary Operational Environment (COE). They are the leaders who are walking the patrols, managing civic work projects, meeting local community leaders, and acting as the “face” of the United States in the hearts and minds of the ordinary people of the nation in which they find themselves operating in. In order to accomplish this, our junior leaders must not only remain warriors, but also possess skills in governance, statesmanship, negotiation, and management – “The Pentathlete.”

The issue for the Army is that we can’t wait to develop the skills and attributes of the “Pentathlete” until our leaders are battalion or brigade commanders. The Army must establish mechanisms and programs to develop these skills early in a leader’s career. This is a considerable challenge. The purpose of this paper is to examine some of the challenges, risks, and method’s to develop the skills and attributes of “The Pentathlete” in our junior officers.

## Why Pentathlete?

But, just what is a “The Pentathlete” and why did the GEN Schoomaker select it as the metaphor to describe his vision of future Army leaders? Wikipedia defines the Pentathlete as an athlete who participates in the Pentathlon [5]. The Ancient Pentathlon, which is different than the modern pentathlon, was an athletic competition in the Olympic Games and other Panhellenic Games of Ancient Greece. The name derives from Greek words for “five competitions.” The five events were stadium (short foot race), wrestling, the long jump, javelin throw, discus throw, and at various times also included wrestling and boxing [6]. Pentathletes were considered to be among the most skilled and admired athletes of the ancient Greek world. Their training was often a part of their military service as each of the five events was thought to be valuable and useful in battle. The Pentathlon represented the climax of the Games with the winner receiving the title of ‘Victor Ludorum’ (Latin for "the winner of the games") and was considered the champion of the entire Games [7]. Aristotle had this to say about the ancient Pentathlon:

“Beauty varies with each age. In a young man, consists in possessing a body capable of enduring all efforts, either of the racecourse or of bodily strength, while he himself is pleasant to look upon and a sheer delight. This is why the athletes in the Pentathlon are most beautiful, because they are naturally adapted for bodily exertion and for swiftness of foot.”

“For one who is able to throw his legs about in a certain way, to move them rapidly and with long strides, makes a good runner; one who can hug and grapple, a good wrestler; one who can thrust away by a blow of the fist, a good boxer; one who excels in boxing and wrestling is fit for the pancratium, he who excels in all for the Pentathlon.”

“The most perfect sportsmen therefore are the pentathletes because in their bodies’ strength and speed are combined in perfect harmony” [8].

The ancient pentathlete was an athlete who excelled in numerous, challenging, and sometimes unrelated physical tests. He possessed a rare combination of speed, strength, stamina, determination, skill in multiple disciplines, and moral character. In short, he embodied the Greek ideal for the perfect athlete, warrior, and man. Although Aristotle’s description does not seamlessly translate into today’s Army concept, it is very easy to see why the GEN Schoomaker chose the multi-faceted “Pentathlete” as the model for Army Leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The CSA envisions an Army Leader who is multi-skilled in a variety of complex competencies, many of which typically not associated with traditional warfighting, and who possesses a wide range of

attributes, at the same time maintaining their core ethos as a warfighter and warrior. His mandate was to “create, develop, and nurture a different kind of Army leader. A leader, who at the brigade and below level possesses five key skills: a competent full spectrum warfighter; a strategic and creative thinker; a skilled leader in governance, statesmanship, and diplomacy; a general awareness of cultures with a focus on a particular area of the world; and a builder of leaders and teams.” This pent-athlete also possesses five key attributes: decisive, with integrity and character, rapid, informed decision making amidst uncertainty and confusion; emphatic; dedicated to life-long learning; and an effective communicator [9]. The CSA further defines the “The Pentathlete” as a leader who demonstrates intellectual and cultural agility; possesses key politico-military skill mastery backed by unparalleled training and education; acquires and maintains basic proficiency in a foreign language; has a general awareness of foreign cultures with a focus on a particular area in the world; is able to make rapid, informed decisions amidst uncertainty and confusion; is a master negotiator and communicator; is technologically capable; and possesses a warrior ethos [10]. The CSA envisions a leader who possesses the requisite skills and attributes that will allow him/her to operate and succeed in virtually any situation and environment. Army Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are to be competent warriors, statesman, and business managers – in essence, a “Jack of all Trades” [11].

Figure 1 depicts the Secretary of the Army and GEN Schoomaker’s vision for “The Pentathlete.”

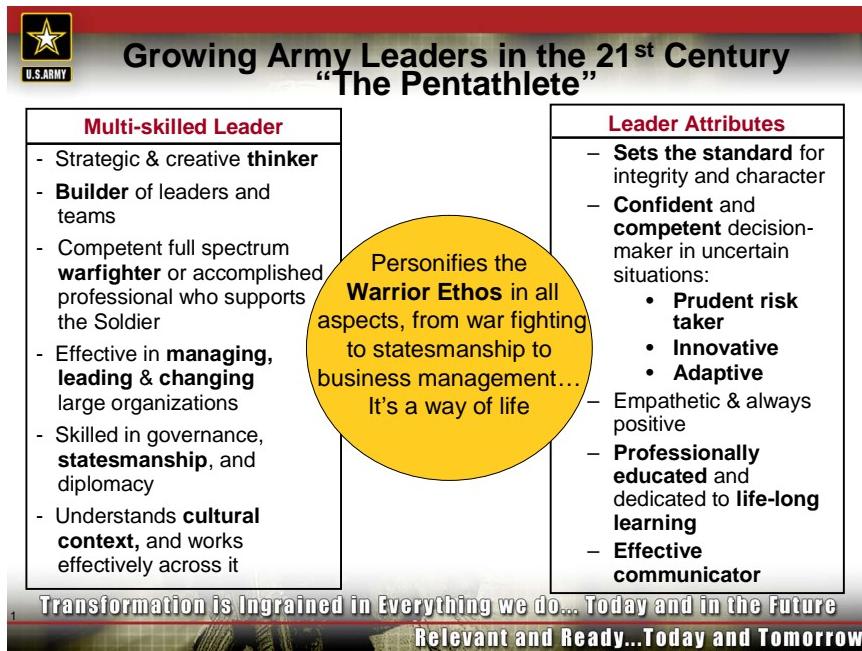


Figure 1. "The Pentathlete."

### The Changing Operational Environment

The desire to train, develop and inculcate the skills, attributes and ethos of “The Pentathlete” into Army Leaders, especially leaders at the battalion and below level, is an extremely challenging proposition. It is predicated on a belief, by senior Army leaders, as well as many theorists, that the United States has entered into a new age of military and foreign engagement. As the world’s only superpower, the US will have no single or near-single peer competitor until at least 2020 [12]. The common belief is the likelihood of the US military engaging in traditional high-intensity conventional warfighting, as the Army experienced in WWII, Korea, and Desert Storm, is extremely remote. The Contemporary Operational Environment (COE) will require US military forces to be committed primarily in support of peace making, peace keeping, nation building, and counter-insurgency operations. In order to succeed in operations of this type, a different type of military leader is required. The previously common held assumption that proficiency in skills associated with traditional conventional warfighting would serve as a foundational base, allowing leaders, soldiers and units to adapt, adjust and succeed in virtually any environment is no longer valid. Thus, in order to ensure success in the COE, Army Leaders must broaden their skill-set and become multi-skilled “Pentathletes.”

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The Contemporary Operational Environment (COE) refers to the overall operational environment that exists today and out to the year 2020. The range of threats that the US may face during this period range from smaller, lower-technology opponents using more adaptive, asymmetric methods to larger, modernized forces able to engage deployed US forces in more conventional, symmetrical ways. In some instances (or in multiple, concurrent conflicts), a combination of these types of threats may occur [13]. Unlike conditions during the “cold-war,” the future strategic environment will remain multi-polar and extremely complex. No longer restricted by the bi-polar struggle that existed between the US and U.S.S.R., nations, transnational actors, and non-nation state entities are free to challenge and redefine the global distribution of power, the concept of sovereignty, and the nature of warfare [14]. Evidenced by operations in Iraq, the US Army is faced with a dynamic, multidimensional, and interconnected global operational environment [15].

This environment is extremely complex at the tactical and operational level. For example, Soldiers in Iraq are operating in both rural, desert, and urban environments. Their operational environment is characterized by a dynamic, aggressive and violent insurgency (and in many parts of the country a civil war), based on historical sectarian divisions. The insurgents are a determined, adaptive and formidable enemy. Further compounding the complexity are economic and political power struggles, random unrelated criminal activity, tribal disputes with accompanying armed tribal militias operating outside the rule of law, and hostile former Sadaam - Baathist regime elements (Sunni’s upset at being the minority in the new government). Additionally, terrorists networks (Al-Qaeda) and foreign fighters (most notably from Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia) provide both direct and indirect support to the insurgency.

This environment is complicated and confusing enough, but we are also asking junior leaders to go out on combat patrols at night and then in the daytime plan, organize, and execute civic action plans. These include: establishing basic needs for the populace – water, electricity, trash collection, sanitation, and health care; assisting in hospital and medical clinic restoration; humanitarian assistance; creating conditions for employing Iraqis; and securing and conducting road and transportation infrastructure improvements. As an Infantry Captain from the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Assault Division who served as a platoon leader in Mosul remarked; “we were faced with situations and asked to accomplish missions that we neither expected, had little or no experience

in, nor trained on. We constantly had to adapt and improvise to the unique situations, doing the best that we could. Unfortunately, most of our senior leaders were just as inexperienced in these matters as we were” [16].

This new environment also portends a change to the conventional perceptions of the nature of close combat, which always has been and remains the primary focus of junior combat arms officers. “These perceptions include deliberate actions conducted at a tempo, which we decide and are characterized by the application of technology and advanced systems that leave opponents virtually helpless to respond or retaliate by traditional means. Additionally, US public perception of close combat operations, except for those veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, is based on a premise of low casualties, a secure homeland, precision attacks, and relatively short duration of conflict. Another generally accepted paradigm is that US military forces retain significant advantage in almost every measurable area” [17]. These perceptions do not represent military reality today. As our Soldiers are experiencing in Iraq, despite the popular notion that technology, precision weapons, robotic systems, and linked fiber-optic communications network can create the world of a bloodless and more human type of warfare; this has not been the case. The future battlefield is and will not be sterile. In fact, it appears that future close combat will be much more dynamic, lethal, and unpredictable. “It will possess greater intensity, increased tempo, and greater uncertainty, placing increased value on the human dimension in relation to technological dimension. It will require greater teamwork at all levels and place significant demands on individual and unit discipline. It will require mature leaders with superb cognitive and reasoning skills who are masters of tactical battlefield calculus and are both mentally and physically tough” [18].

As always, the physical environment is and will remain one of the most critical elements of close combat. Whether the physical environment is urban, rural, mountainous, or wooded, it will be more complex than ever. The force that is best able to operate in and exploit the environment is most often the force that wins battles. Because of wide reaching American global interests and involvement, the US Army must be able to operate in and achieve dominance in any physical environment – against all types of opponents [19]. “Operations in complex terrain and urban environments alter the basic nature of close combat. History tells us that because of the close proximity of forces, engagements will be more frequent and occur more rapidly. They

will be more manpower intensive and less system centric. There will be greater opportunity for surprise and loss of contact with the enemy will have greater consequences than in more open environments. Lines of communication will be more difficult to secure and CSS units will be more vulnerable. Maneuver warfare, with greater precision over shorter distances, will be required” [20].

The enemy will also not be as predictable as our past conventional estimation and training focus. It will be extremely difficult to template the enemy as he uses new, unconventional techniques (IEDs, suicide attacks, insurgents dressed and posing as US and Iraqi Soldiers to gain access to US facilities, etc.) in an attempt to confuse and create opportunities against us. Our potential enemies will attempt to exploit complex terrain and urban environments to obtain tactical advantage and offset our technological, range, and training advantages. He will attempt to conduct multiple simultaneously operations in order to keep US units off balance. This will result in a marked increase in the tempo of close combat operations. In today’s environment, enemy forces, as was well as close combat means and methods will be less predictable [21].

This increased unpredictability, coupled with the difficult nature of the environment, will create uncertainty. Commanders and leaders will find it difficult to focus themselves and their units on a single action but instead will have to account for multiple actions and events [22]. As mentioned before, not only do our leaders have to focus on combat operations, but also in many cases civil projects as well, further compounding the complexity of the new environment.

The overall complexity and uncertainty of the environment will place increasing demands on force qualities such as organization, training proficiency, and skillful leadership. As senior leaders are unable to exercise directed control on a level that they are accustomed to, independent action by small units and independent decision making by junior leaders will become the norm. Unit morale, cohesion, tactical proficiency and the ability to make timely and appropriate decisions independently at the small unit level will be paramount.

In short, the playing field for our junior combat leaders will require unparalleled levels of individual and unit tactical skill, rapid and effective decision making at the lowest levels, amplified mental and physical determination, and more direct leadership involvement than ever before. In order to meet these predicted demands of close combat in the COE, our junior combat

leaders must become absolute experts in the individual and collective tactical skills associated with warfighting at their particular level. As most combat arms officers would surely admit, the all-around mastery of these skills is an extremely challenging proposition, with few ever gaining complete expertise, mastery and confidence. So, how does the need to become tactical warfighting “experts” relate to the CSA’s vision for creating a “Pentathlete” leader? It means that any attempt to add additional skill requirements to our junior leaders may hamper the development of the critical and foundational warfighting skills associated with close combat, which should always remain their core function.

### Creating “The Pentathlete” – Institutional Ideas

#### **Cultural Awareness**

Numerous accounts, reports, and news articles depict American Soldiers as having very little understanding of cultures outside their own. The lack of cultural understanding is one cause of and has compounded many mistakes and problems, thereby increasing the difficulty of successfully executing their mission, especially in a counter-insurgency or stability, support and reconstruction operation. This is a result of two main factors; Americans, in general, lack knowledge about other people and cultures, and the inadequacy of cultural training in the Army’s officer education system. The Army’s new Counter-Insurgency manual (FM 3-24) clearly states the importance and positive affect constructive direct contact can have with the populace of the country we are operating in. The direct interaction with the local population, if combined with an understanding of the cultural and social aspects of the situation, can increase the trust between US military personnel and the population. One of the most effective ways to increase the effectiveness of the military’s operations overseas is to enhance the trust of the civilian population toward the Army. A key component in developing trust is the establishment of personal relationships. Understanding, respecting, and adhering to customs, traditions and the culture will only enhance this process.

In this era of media saturation and instant communications, the age of globalization and the War on Terror, where everything transpires in front of a CNN camera or recorded in a reporter’s journal, it is the junior leaders on the ground with the rifle who truly matter. These are the individuals who are required to determine friend from foe, make sense out of complex tribal

culture, and make on the spot decisions that can have far reaching implications, not just for tactics and operations, but for strategy and policies as well [23]. They are the individuals who have daily contact with the population and their actions, good or bad, can have far-reaching implications on the public view of US policy, Americans, and its Soldiers.

Although the Army can do very little to change the general apathy that the American public treats the need to understand other cultures and taking into account that our soldiers and leaders are drawn from this environment, the Army can establish several initiatives to increase the cultural understanding and awareness of our junior leaders.

### **Establish Specific Undergraduate School Requirements Prior to Commissioning**

In conjunction with Cadet Command and the United States Military Academy (USMA), the Army should establish specific undergraduate school requirements and prerequisites for all officer candidates prior to graduation and commissioning. These should include requiring potential officer candidates to complete at least one, preferably two, years of foreign language training. As a consideration for commissioning, officer candidates should be required to demonstrate basic proficiency in a second language. Two years of college undergraduate foreign language study would accomplish this. The inability of US Army Leaders to speak a second language is more than an Army specific shortfall. In comparison to most of the world, it is a glaring American deficiency and has almost become part of our cultural make-up.

This shortfall may be difficult to address as many elementary, middle and even high schools in the country do not offer foreign language instruction as part of their curriculum. But for those that do, this process could start by encouraging students enrolled in junior ROTC programs, or students interested in pursuing ROTC or USMA, to begin language training while in high school.

The Army should also examine the core curriculum requirements for potential officer candidates. As opposed to allowing students to select electives of their own choosing, require classes in the social science arena; regional studies, religion, political science, public communication, public affairs, conflict management, negotiation, etc. As an alternative to full-enrollment in these classes, an option would be for officer candidates to audit the required courses. This provides the mechanism to obtain general knowledge in the subject area without

significantly increasing workload or time requirements, especially for those students with demanding majors.

## **General Pershing**

The Secretary of the Army's presentation, *The “Pentathlete” Historical Insights*, contains several examples of present and former officers who embodied the skills and attributes of the “Pentathlete.” GEN John “Blackjack” Pershing is cited as a prime example of a multi-skilled officer who was not only a skilled warfighter but also possessed astute socio-political skills and a keen appreciation of the affect and importance cultural nuances could have on military operations. It is certainly true that GEN Pershing possessed these skills, but the presentation does not give the full story as to how a boy from a small town in Missouri and an officer of an essentially “conus based” Army acquired them. GEN Pershing was not born with these skills. They were developed based on a lifetime of Army assignments, operations and experiences. These included assignments as the Military Attaché in Japan observing the Russo-Japanese War, military observer assigned to the Balkans, Commander of Fort McKinley and governor of the Moro Province. Additionally, he participated in military operations in Mexico, Canada, Cuba, the Philippines, France and Germany. GEN Pershing also created his own opportunities to enhance his knowledge and experience. On several occasions during his Army career, he asked the Army for, and was granted, periods of extended leave. These were sometimes up to several months in duration. GEN Pershing utilized these leave periods, not only to rest, take care of personal affairs, politic for promotion and assignments, but to travel, study, and explore extensively outside the United States.

GEN Pershing is most remembered for his service as the Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Europe during World War I. What is not commonly realized is that most of his knowledge of Europe; its people, culture, terrain, and military were gained during one of his extended leave periods where he traveled, studied and made personal contacts throughout the region, primarily in France. In addition to his superior military skills, his basic knowledge of the French language – acquired in school and from his travels – plus his familiarity with the country were also considerations in selecting GEN Pershing as the AEF Commander [24]. The “Pentathlete” skills and attributes GEN Pershing possessed derived from a

combination of varied overseas assignments, extensive military operations, service in diplomatic capacities, and extensive personal travel and self-study.

### **Opportunities for Foreign Exposure**

Providing opportunities for foreign exposure, outside of operational deployments, will be difficult as the US Army moves away from its forward deployed posture to a primarily conus-based deployable force. As the Army re-postures itself and returns from bases in Germany, Korea and elsewhere in the world, we will no longer have the “built-in” system of overseas assignments that provide the experience of living overseas for large numbers of the force. Although it can be argued that these countries are not where the United States is likely conduct operations in the future and that there is little need to understand their culture, I would counter that living overseas, in no matter what country, broadens a person’s overall awareness and appreciation of other people, cultures, languages, religions, etc. Living overseas also provides the opportunity to travel to other nations as well. It is not uncommon for Soldiers assigned to Germany, Italy, Korea, or elsewhere in the world to use the opportunity to travel throughout the region, thus broadening their own understanding of the world and its people.

The challenge for the Army is how to provide similar opportunities for today’s officers. Unlike GEN Pershing, I think it is safe to say that given the current OPTEMPO and present Army culture, no officer would ever be granted a two month leave to travel throughout a country or region.

### **Country – Regional Orientation**

As the Army explores opportunities to provide leaders with foreign exposure and experience in order to mitigate the loss of overseas assignments, an option is to establish a program similar to the CAPSTONE course for newly designated General Officers (GOs). As part of this training course, small groups of GOs, from all services, travel to areas of the world where the U.S. has strategic interests and receive regional, military, political, social and cultural orientation.

The Army could develop a similar, albeit scaled down, program for senior company grade and field grade officers. This program could be planned, organized, and executed by Attachés’ and their staff assigned to a specific country/region. Select groups of highly

competitive officers could travel to a region for a brief orientation. In order to avoid a conflict with current or future assignments, this program could be executed as an adjunct to the Captain's Career Course (CCC) or during attendance at Intermediate Level Education (ILE)/Command and General Staff College (CGSC). In addition to the normal ILE/CGSC curriculum, designated students would spend a couple of weeks overseas executing a regional orientation study at the direction of the country attaché. Upon return to the school, students would be required to develop an in-depth country or regional presentation based upon their experience. This could be briefed to other students in order to broaden the collective understanding of that particular area of the world. As the Army's ARFORGEN model matures and current force OPTEMPO diminishes, this program could also be executed during the training phase by Brigade Combat Team (BCT) leaders who are alerted for possible deployment to a specific country.

An excellent example of this concept was practiced by the German Army during the 1920s – 1930s. German Army officers were encouraged to take three-month foreign tours in order to broaden their education, enhance their understanding of other nations, and improve their fluency in foreign language. This even included a special travel allowance. Officers completing such tours were expected to write full reports on their host country upon their return. From 1923 to 1939, German officers visited countries all over the world, to include the US, visiting military institutions, meeting and talking with foreign military and civilian authorities, and gaining a general understanding of other peoples and cultures [25].

Another option for the Army is to allow designated junior officers to take a sabbatical for several months (2-3) during a designated period in their career, ideally prior to taking company command. The intent of this sabbatical is to enhance personal and professional growth. It would be structured, monitored and controlled. As part of the sabbatical, officers would be required to plan, organize, and execute a regional studies trip. This program would be similar to what is required of Foreign Area Officers (FAOs). They are required to research, plan, organize and execute a country and regional orientation prior to assuming their duties in that particular country. This would be executed with the assistance of and in coordination with in-country FAOs or the attaché's office. This is very similar to what General Pershing conducted during his extended leave period in Europe as a Major, as well as what many German officers did in the inter-war years.

## **Expand the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program**

Prior to the downsizing of the Army following Desert Storm, the Army had a robust FAO program. For the most part, the Army maintained an officer stationed at embassies throughout the world where the US had strategic interests. These “soldier statesman” performed the traditional duties of foreign military representatives; representing the US at official functions, establishing personal and professional contacts and liaison with the host nation, coordinating visits by US dignitaries, observing and gathering intelligence, instructing, and monitoring and staying abreast of military, political, economic and social events. Furthermore, and probably most importantly, these officers became the political-military experts of that particular country and region. This was accomplished by a combination of formal schooling, language training, living in and traveling throughout the region, extensive exposure to the culture and adherence to the customs, use of the language, and working with and establishing relationships with host nation nationals.

Additionally, previous Officer Professional Management System (OPMS) policies allowed officers assigned to FAO duty to return to operational units to perform duties in their basic branch as commanders and staff officers. They were called “operational FAOs” [26].

This policy provided the Army a contingent of regional specialists who could be utilized as operational and strategic planners, advisers on senior level staffs, and military representatives in non-DOD agencies such as the State Department and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). It provided the added benefit of allowing “operational FAOs” to share their unique knowledge and experience with other leaders, to include brigade level and below officers, when they returned to troop units [27].

Consistent with the overall reduction of forces within the Army during the 1990s, the FAO program was reduced and personnel policies were changed. Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) policies were revised which precluded FAOs from returning to basic branch assignments following duty in a FAO position [28]. Thus, not only did the Army reduce its cadre of regional political-military specialists, but the positive ancillary affects of these officers sharing their unique knowledge with other leaders in troop units was lost.

In order to facilitate a more culturally aware officer corps, an option is for the Army to increase the overall number of FAOs or allow officers who are not FAOs to serve in FAO

positions overseas. The Army should also explore returning to the option of allowing officers who serve in FAO positions to serve again in troop units, thereby sharing their experiences with other leaders throughout the force.

It appears that the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Army has recognized the importance of the FAO program and the contributing role FAOs can play in operations.

In an April 2005 Department of Defense Directive, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz directed that all services develop, resource and sustain FAO programs designed to develop, retain, motivate and promote a cadre of officers to be available to meet Defense present and future needs. These officers must possess basic military specialty qualification, Level 3 language proficiency, graduate level education focusing on, but not limited to, political, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of a specific region [29].

In response to this directive, as well as the real world need for FAOs that already exist in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army recently announced that it will increase FAO billets by 30 percent by 2009 [30].

Additionally, the FAO Proponent, in coordination with TRADOC, the Combat Arms Development Division (CADD) at Leavenworth, and FAO Branch Human Resource Command (HRC) are working an initiative to place FAOs in BCTs, Divisions, and Corps. FAOs will not permanently reside at these echelons since these commands are not regional focused. Instead, the officers would reside at the Numbered Armies and work in the International Military Affairs Division. These officers would work theater security engagement actions, provide FAO expertise to BCT/DIV/Corps when needed during regional exercises, training deployments, etc. When a BCT/DIV/Corps receives orders to deploy, the International Military Affairs Division would push needed FAOs to appropriate commands [31].

Although this initiative is a step in the right direction, it falls short in providing permanent political-military experts at BCT level. FAOs assigned to a BCT throughout the unit's three year life cycle would not only provide a fully integrated member of the BCT Commander's team, but also valuable "in-house" experience in variety of areas to include; country, regional and cultural instruction, assisting in the design of training scenarios, basic language training, and liaison with NGOs.

## **Foreign Service Orientation Course**

As operations in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate, combined operations with other governmental organizations, most notably the State Department, will be the norm in the future. In many cases, Army leaders at all levels are required to work with, for, and alongside personnel from these other organizations. Unfortunately, members of the military have very little understanding of the roles, missions, responsibilities, methods, values, ethics, and culture of these non-military organizations. In most cases they are very different from the Army's. The same can be said of State Department personnel where few have ever had contact with or understand the unique nature of the military culture or service. In order to facilitate greater understanding between Army personnel and members of the State Department, the Army should consider sending officers to the Foreign Service Orientation Course. This six-week course is required for all members of the Foreign Service-State Department. It would provide Army leaders with a basic orientation of the State Department and facilitate an appreciation by both Army and State Department personnel of the unique contributions both organizations can make. In order to maximize the benefit of this program and match relative ages and experience of the students, the Army should send officers immediately after the Captain's Career Course and prior to assuming company command [32].

## **Inter-agency School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMs) Course**

In an effort to enhance inter-operability, foster understanding, and effectively work with the many organizations that may operate in conjunction with military personnel, the Army should consider creating an Inter-agency "SAMs" course. This course could include members of the Army, our sister services, DOD, DIA, State Department, Department of the Interior, Central Intelligence Agency, Executive Office, etc. This course would be exercise focused: designed around scenarios that would drive collaborative planning and discussion. These exercises would provide the forum for discussion and sharing of ideas and perspectives, thereby facilitating greater understanding of the unique capabilities (or lack of), characteristics, and nuances of each organization.

## **Service with the US State Department**

Similar to the intent of assigning non-designated FAO officers to overseas FAO duties in order to gain foreign exposure, the Army should explore the possibility of assigning select junior officers for duty with the State Department at US embassies throughout the world. Working with State Department and Foreign Service representatives would not only increase their contact with other peoples' and cultures, but would provide valuable exposure to the inner workings of the diplomatic and Foreign Service Corps. In order to avoid a lengthy break in the normal operational career pattern and avoid a costly PCS move, duty in this capacity could be limited in duration, possibly six months to one year. In order to enhance and maximize this experience, the officer could also plan and execute a country/regional studies trip in conjunction with this duty.

## **Broadening Experiences**

As described earlier, the goal of creating “Pentathletes” is to develop multi-skilled leaders who are world-class warriors, competent in statesmanship, enterprise management, governance, as well as strategic and creative thinkers. However, even though warfighting will always remain the primary focus of Army leaders, our engagement in a wide-ranging spectrum of complex environments and operations will require broader perspective and thinking on the part of our leaders [33].

In Dr. Leonard Wong’s Strategic Studies Institute insightful article “Fashion Tips for the Field Grade,” he argues that although the Army preaches the desire for multi-skilled “Pentathletes,” the evidence does not as yet support a culture or institutional system to support its development. “The shift to developing pentathletes gradually has become evident in Army training and schools, but the change has not permeated the officer assignment process. Despite the examples of current pentathletes such as General Abizaid, Petraeus, or Charelli – who added language studies or studying abroad – the evidence shows that up-and-coming senior leaders are increasingly choosing to restrict their career paths to assignments that stick closely to traditional warfighting skills” [34]. He cites a comparison of past and present career paths of general officers which shows a growing avoidance on any assignment away from Army units or staff. In 1995, 11 out of the 36 newly selected brigadier generals had attended full time graduate school earlier in their careers. “Their perspectives were broadened in diverse institutions such as Duke, University of Virginia, and University of Wisconsin as these future general officers were

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exposed to a different way of thinking and problem solving” [35]. By 2005, the number of newly selected brigadier generals who had taken time out of the careers for full time graduate study had dropped to just 3 out of 38 [36].

Dr. Wong found similar evidence in the 2006 brigade command list where the career paths of only 12 of the 50 officers slated for tactical command had ventured outside the muddy boots track for assignments such as Office of the Secretary of Defense or Joint Chiefs of Staff intern, congressional fellow, or full time graduate study. All other officers chose to stay within the traditional command and staff Army assignments focusing on the war fight [37].

Although this aspect touches on the Army culture, in discussions and interviews with over 200 Army junior officers, approximately 80% felt that there was still a negative stigma attached to seeking jobs and assignment opportunities away from operational assignments or those focused at the tactical level. For example, if an officer desired to attend graduate school or serve as a congressional or JCS fellow following company command, this would be frowned on and discouraged by their unit leaders and would ultimately be viewed less favorably by promotion and selection boards. For combat arms officers, the only assignments that they felt were “acceptable” were duty as observer controllers (OCs) at the combat training centers (CTCs), small group instructors (SGIs) at the branch schools, and duty with the Ranger Regiment. Anything else would put them at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers who served in those positions [38]. In order for the “Pentathlete” concept to become a reality, the Army must change this dynamic.

## **Graduate Studies**

During interviews with over 200 Army captains and majors, one consistent proposal, as well as personal desire, to assist in the development of “Pentathletes” was expressed – expanding graduate school opportunities. Over 90% these junior officers opined that the opportunity to attend graduate school would be both personally and professionally rewarding and very beneficial [39]. As Dr. Wong states, attendance to a civilian institution, especially as part of a graduate program, would expose the officer to a broad range of people, ideas, and experiences. The Army has already announced that it intends to expand opportunities for graduate level education for its officers. In order to maximize the benefit of this initiative, ideally, officers should attend graduate school prior to company command. This would provide an excellent

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break from the rigors of their first 3-5 years in the service and provide the Army with more educated, mature and well-rounded company commanders. The foundations of cognitive development occur early in an officer's career and the broadening experience of graduate study would complement this dynamic.

Another option for the Army is to consider offering a leave of absence (possibly at partial pay) in order for officers to pursue an advanced degree. Tie this to an increased service obligation for those officers who choose this opportunity. This would prevent civilian corporations from recruiting these officers after the Army pays for their education.

### **Institutional Schooling**

In June 2004, the TRADOC Commander, General Byrnes, tasked the U.S. Army War College to study the post initial-entry Officer Education System (OES). The Agile Leader Study's (ALS) charter was to assess OES curricula and the Combat Training Centers' (CTC) training environments to determine how well-suited they were for developing leaders to operate effectively in the COE. The study's research showed that many junior officers displayed great agility in dealing with the new challenges of combat operations in IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) [40].

From this finding, the study attempted to answer several questions: Was this agility simply individual talent or did their institutional training and education instill it? Is the OES preparing them to be agile? What can we do better to prepare them [41]? Because of the critical importance and expanded role of junior leaders in the COE, the study focused on the Captain's Career Course (CCC). The ALS conducted interviews with developers, instructors, and students from across the spectrum of the post-initial entry OES as well as planners, observer-controllers, and participant players at the CTCs [42]. The ALS's observations were grouped into three main categories; content, context, and complexity.

The study found that the content of the CCCs was dominated by doctrine; basic branch doctrine, combined arms doctrine, and the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). These three doctrinal elements formed the core of every CCC [43]. Because the CCC is the last branch specific school in the OES, each school viewed the content and structure of the course as their own exclusive domain and was directly related to the branch's vision and culture. The school was viewed as the means for each branch to re-educate officers to basic traditional doctrine and

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skills, especially since most students were coming out of combat deployments where their basic branch skills were underutilized or neglected. Offensive and defensive tactics at the company and battalion level comprised the vast majority of the combined arms doctrine. The MDMP, with multiple iterative exercises, was used as the driver to train and understand branch and combined arms doctrine. The incorporation of lessons learned was instructor dependent and varied greatly between the various branch schools [44].

The tactical scenarios utilized for the core content focused on the traditional, mid-to-high intensity conflicts against a peer or near-peer enemy, who invariably utilized Soviet model tactics and equipment. Most of the scenarios took place in generic settings (not related to a current or future potential warfighting area). Most commonly, local areas were utilized to allow students to walk the ground and gain appreciation for the affects of terrain on operations. The choice of terrain for the scenario was not viewed as critical since the focus of the instruction was on how and not what to think. The study of regional culture was not included in the course. Complexity was added incrementally to each exercise and was primarily based on the amount of information presented to the student and the level of command (company or battalion) that was addressed. Incorporating different cultural challenges into the scenarios, with its associated additional complexities, was not a part of the exercise or the curriculum [45].

As a former Small Group Instructor (SGI) at the Infantry Officer Advance Course (IOAC) from 1992-1994, I was amazed as to how little the basic intent, design, and structure of the CCC had changed based on the findings of the ALS. Although the requirement for our junior leaders to possess a basic understanding of Army as well as specific branch doctrine remains as important today as it always has, the methods of instruction outlined by the ALS is not optimum for facilitating the development of “Pentathletes.” This is especially true in developing mental agility, cross-cultural awareness, and the nature and dynamics of full-spectrum operations. This assessment was affirmed in the Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) Task Force study and report which stated, that although officer training, assignments and leader development for the kinetic fight are fundamentally sound, the competencies required for the non-kinetic fight should be expanded and improved. The study identified that in the process of developing “Pentathletes,” the current leader development system is uneven early in an officer’s career and does not take advantage of all developmental opportunities [46].

## **OES / CCC Recommendations**

### *Expand and Lengthen the CCC*

Brigadier General Aylwin-Foster argues that the company commander “is the lynchpin in the de-centralized operations that tend to characterize counterinsurgency, stabilization, and reconstruction operations” [47]. The level, intensity and myriad responsibilities required of company commanders in the COE, and the requisite knowledge and skills required to effectively execute those responsibilities, are greater today than ever before. In order to ensure that future commanders are sufficiently prepared to assume these duties, it would seem natural that there would be corresponding drive to increase the amount of formal institutional training received by captains prior to assuming command. This does not appear to be the case.

In interviews and discussions with senior leaders responsible for the CCC at the Maneuver Center, Fort Benning, they described increasing impetus from TRADOC to further shorten, what they already perceive as a “too short” CCC. The CCC is currently 19 ½ weeks in duration and there are proposals to reduce the course by several additional weeks. Although there are several reasons for reducing the length of the CCC, the primary motive is cost reduction. If the proposal becomes a reality, in order to make up for the abridged instruction time, greater emphasis would be placed on leveraging distance learning. Proposals include a plan to reduce the resident school portion of the CCC to just a few weeks (unspecified duration but estimated to be 4-8 weeks) with the remainder of the instruction occurring at the officer’s home station via distance learning or VTC. Based on interviews and discussion with approximately 180 CCC students, instructors, and administrators at the Maneuver Center, this was universally considered an extremely poor idea and a grave mistake. Reducing, in any way, the time spent by officers at the CCC would further compound the already challenging dynamic of training and preparing these critical junior leaders for their duties as company commanders.

As one Tactics Team Chief related, “we have seen a significant change in the skill set of the CCC students between 2004 and 2006. We are now seeing captains coming to the CCC without the doctrinal knowledge and fundamental warfighting skills that you would expect from combat arms officers at this point in their career. All they know are the skills associated with operations in Iraq.” For example, he described Infantry and Armor captains who arrive at the school with little understanding of the traditional tactics associated with deliberate assault,

breaching operations, movement to contact, defensive operations, and training management. Although this is understandable as a result of focusing precious training time at unit level on preparing leaders and units for on-going operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it does pose a significant challenge to the branch school to make-up for this deficiency in an officer's long-term professional development. Branch school leaders and instructors are faced with the task of developing curriculum and a Program of Instruction (POI) which effectively balances the need to develop broad based doctrinally and tactically sound officers with current operationally focused skills associated with Iraq or Afghanistan. Because of the limited duration of the course, this results in a POI which briefly introduces students to each topic area without providing the opportunity for application or in-depth study for many subject areas.

The desire to replace or supplement resident CCC instruction with distance learning was equally viewed as a mistake by instructors and students. Relying on distance learning would lose the powerful dynamic and benefits provided by small group instruction. The face to face interaction with peers and instructors, the sharing of personal experiences, the desire to "put their best foot forward" (i.e. maximum effort) in front of peers, the focused effort on learning – all of these would be lost with distance learning. Additionally, almost every student interviewed felt that there would be little, if any, time to accomplish distance learning while assigned to an operational unit. A requirement to do so would be viewed as an added burden, given a low priority, and accomplished with the minimum effort possible. In short, they would check the block. This is not what the Army wants or what these officers deserve at this critical stage in their professional development.

Nearly every officer interviewed stated that there was limited time available for self-study or professional education while assigned to an operational unit. Over 80% of the officers had one or two deployments during first three years in a unit [48]. The following scenario represented most of their experiences: arrived to unit...immediately began training to deploy (usually not enough time to prepare properly)...deploy...re-deploy...30 days leave...begin training in preparation to deploy again...deploy.

For those officers with families, which were approximately 60%, the general feeling was that the only time available for professional study was in the school house. Most stated they were not willing to devote additional time to self-study and development. There were a variety

of reasons, but most commonly it was seen as direct competition with a decent quality of life (free time, family, rest, etc.). [49]

As stated previously, junior leader requirements for operating in the COE are greater today than ever before. Our junior leaders must be prepared for full-spectrum operations, to include conventional operations, counterinsurgency operations, stability, support and reconstruction operations. They must also be culturally astute. They must know how to effectively leverage the Army's newest technology. They must possess a basic understanding of other governmental and non-governmental organizations that they may encounter and work with. They will operate in a dynamic, complicated, and ever changing environment which requires tremendous flexibility and mental agility. These are the skills associated with the "Pentathlete."

However, many of these areas are not addressed by units as part of home station training in preparation for deployment. This is a function of, but not limited to: limited time, innumerable other tasks to accomplish, tremendous pace of activity, limited resources, lack of qualified instructors, or simple omission by unit leaders. In order to ensure that our junior leaders have at least a general understanding of all of these skills, a comprehensive institutional course is required.

As opposed to shortening the CCC, the Army should be exploring options to lengthen the course, incorporating training mechanisms to address these required skills. Leaders at the Maneuver Center recognize this requirement and are currently developing and incorporating changes to the CCC. The course is transitioning from a "procedural" based to a more "outcomes" based course. They are trying to incorporate a philosophy of teaching the students more "how to think" vice "what to think." Two thirds of all tactical modules will be focused on the "art" of applying the scientific principles of each topic. In order to facilitate rapid decision making and flexibility, tactical decision exercises and force on force simulations are in development. These are focused on Iraq scenarios and incorporate asymmetric IPB, collection, analysis and expose students to "strategic skills" associated with diplomacy, negotiation and cultural awareness. In order to capture lessons learned and propagate experiences, every student will be required to write a monograph based on their personal deployment and operational experiences. These will be collated and published in a book, Infantry in Battle, updated

annually. Students will receive a brief orientation on several of the Army's Battle Command Systems, FBCB2, MCS Light, Falcon View, CCCT, and UCOFT.

Most importantly, Infantry and Army Branch will continue to resource the SGI program with the very best officers available. They currently represent the top 10% of their year group and have all commanded companies for more than 24 months. The goal is for all SGIs to have commanded in combat [50]. This critical dynamic must continue. The Army should select only its best, most experienced officers for service as instructors at its institutional learning centers.

All of these initiatives are a step in the right direction. However, given the limited duration and time available in the course, many of these areas, as well as traditional subjects, are only glossed over, being considered for elimination or are eliminated altogether. For example, the change in focus to counterinsurgency scenarios will result in students receiving only one conventional tactical scenario – situated in Korea. The exchange officer/SGI from the Australian Infantry School stated: “All of these changes are great, but we are still only getting around the margins of what the students require. What we really need is an additional, at a minimum, 6-8 weeks of training time to prepare these officers.” This sentiment was universally endorsed by the other instructors.

### **Prescribed Reading and Writing Program**

“As a Soldier in the United States Army, you have chosen a highly challenging profession, one that takes a lifetime to master. While practical experience, realistic training, and formal education are indispensable for the development of first-class military leaders, so too is independent study. A program of independent reading helps keep the mind fresh and enhances professionalism. The CSA’s Professional Reading List is designed to assist you in this quest by stimulating critical thinking about the profession of soldiering and the continuing role of land power. While we intended the list for independent study, you can also use it as the basis for establishing book clubs, discussion groups, and other professional development activities” [51].

GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, Chief of Staff, US Army

The CSA’s Professional Reading List contains a well-rounded array of books covering subjects in history, military theory, military science, military strategy, political science, globalization, and leadership. They are divided into four sub lists corresponding to a recommended period in the leader’s career when he/she should read the selected works.

As the CSA states in his introductory paragraph, independent study is the primary method prescribed for carrying out the professional reading program. Leaders are encouraged  
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(“challenged”), but not required, to read the selected books as a means to enhance their understanding of our nations and Army’s history, the global strategic context, and the enduring lessons of war. Although many professional officers take this recommendation to heart and establish a disciplined reading program throughout their career, many do not.

Given the increased emphasis on preparing officers for contemporary operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during our time constrained education and training programs, exposing young leaders to different ideas, concepts, and ways of thinking can be a challenging proposition. Whether because of a lack of educational opportunities, limited time, limited, lack of experience, or just plain lack of discipline and desire; there are officers who do not receive or possess the broad based education that is critical to becoming a “Pentathlete.”

Acknowledging the politically, culturally, and militarily complex environments that many of our junior officers operate in, as well as their potential “strategic” importance, the Army should explore options to formalize and institutionalize the reading program as another means to supplement the education process. As opposed to relying on the officer’s “professionalism” and personal desire to expand his/her educational horizons, selected works should be mandated for reading during specific periods of an officer’s career. In order to ensure and monitor compliance, the required reading program could be executed in partnership between the institutional Army and organizational units. The institutional Army would establish and publish specific program requirements; books to read, deadline for completion, writing requirements (if applied to the program), and a mechanism for annotating for record the officer’s compliance or non-compliance with the requirement. Organizational leaders would have responsibility for monitoring and ensuring program requirements are met for officers under their charge. The method employed would be up to them. This could be as simple as monitoring compliance by the use of a checklist (not recommended) or incorporating the program into a much broader unit level professional development program. Key to this program is to develop a system whereby unit leaders are responsible for administering and officially annotating compliance with program requirements. It is recommended that the officer’s senior rater possess this ultimate responsibility.

Embracing the potential ancillary aspects of this program offers opportunities to enhance personal, professional, and unit growth and development. This includes providing relevant

material for professional dialogue, discussion and OPDs, presentations, developing writing skills, and probably most importantly, a vehicle for developing critical thinking skills.

#### Creating “The Pentathlete” – Organizational Ideas

Fostering an environment conducive for developing “Pentathletes” at the organizational level poses a significant challenge. “Pentathlete” motivated initiatives, whether directed or self-motivated, will be implemented at the discretion of unit commanders. It will be up to commanders to create the appropriate climate, institute programs, establish priorities, allocate resources (time in particular), and ensure all initiatives remain relevant and are sustained. Unfortunately, given the incredible pace of activity, numerous requirements, and potential organizational and personal bias of units and commanders, incorporating change or mandating additional requirements will be a difficult proposition. However, there are several options which should be considered at the organizational level that would assist in the development of “Pentathletes.”

#### **The German Army During the Inter-war Years**

In order to prepare units and leaders for operations, even in the COE, the fundamental precept of conducting tough, battle focused training under realistic conditions remains as valid today as it did during the cold war. However, one dynamic has changed – the level of uncertainty or variables faced by junior leaders on the contemporary battlefield. As described previously, junior leaders are now operating in an extremely complex environment characterized by a multitude of varied dynamics. In order to succeed in this environment, leaders at all levels – especially junior leaders – must be flexible in their thinking, adaptive, innovative, and possess the ability to make sound and rapid decisions.

Although Germany was defeated in the Second World War, various studies have concluded that, at the tactical level, the German Army significantly outperformed its opponents throughout the war [52]. Exceptional individual and unit performance at the tactical and operational level were all characteristics demonstrated by a remarkably large portion of the German Army during the war – even when the tide of war had turned irrevocably against Germany in 1943-1945 [53]. Especially at the tactical level, German Army leaders and units

displayed resiliency under extremely harsh conditions, innovative and adaptive leadership, and remarkable unit cohesion.

These characteristics did not develop by chance, but were the product of a conscious decision by senior leaders to create the structure and leadership style within the German Army to facilitate their development. As early as 1890, the Germans regarded confusion as the normal state of the battlefield. The remedy was sought not in any strict regimentation, as was adopted in the British, French and Russian armies, but to further decentralization and the lowering of decision thresholds. Their 1906 Regulations read: “Combat demands thinking, independent leaders and troops, capable of independent action.” This principle was taken a step further in the 1908 Regulations, with this key sentence appearing in every subsequent edition until 1945: “From the youngest soldier upward, the total *independent* commitment of all physical and mental forces is to be demanded. Only thus can the full power of the troops be brought to bear” [54]. The 1936 Truppenfuhrung (Troop Leadership) Regulation which governed officer training clearly articulates the German Army’s expectation of leaders: “Leadership in war demands that leaders possessed of judgment, a clear understanding, and foresight. They must be independent and firm in making a decision, determined and energetic while carrying it out, insensible to the changing fortunes of war, and possessed of a strong consciousness of the high responsibility resting on them” [55].

Another characteristic which set the German Army apart from many of its contemporaries during the period between WWI and WWII was its encouragement and use of “after action studies.” In the 1920’s, the German Army (Reichswehr) initiated an in-depth and candid assessment and analysis of the Army’s performance during the First World War. Special committees were created – made up of only the best officers – to study, not only tactics, regulations, equipment, doctrine, but most importantly leadership [56]. Recognizing many leader and command shortcomings and the desire take advantage of the new technologies, new organizational structures (Panzer Division and combined arms formations) and operational concepts, the German Army during the 1920s and 30s instituted several structural, organizational and cultural changes to fundamentally alter the climate of command and leadership within the Army. An American liaison officer in the 1930s noted that the Germans made decisions with far less preparation than their American counterparts:

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“The Germans point out, that often a Commander must make an important decision after only a few minutes’ deliberation and emphasize, that a fair decision given in time for aggressive execution is much better than one wholly right but too late. They visualize rapidly changing situations in modern warfare and are gearing their command and staff operations accordingly” [57].

With its prediction of rapidly changing situations and the requirement for rapid, effective decision making, the German inter-war assessment on future leader requirements seems very similar to what we are asking and requiring of our junior officers today.

Amplifying this precept, the German Army published Army Regulation 487 (*Leadership and Battle*) in 1923 which prescribed several key concepts that became synonymous with German military leadership and became the foundational core of German Army leader development through World War II. These included two well known concepts which have since been incorporated into our own doctrine; the leader’s will to victory must be communicated to the lowest-ranking soldier, and the majority of the force must be employed at the decisive point.

*Leadership and Battle* was primarily focused on divisional commanders and above, however recognizing the growing importance of junior leaders, the regulation gave very clear guidance pertaining to their development. It advocated that junior leaders be given considerable independent tactical authority. “Insecurity and a confused situation are the norm on the battlefield...therefore the leader on the spot has a special responsibility. He must often make orders in a confusing situation without time consuming reconnaissance and personal reflection” [58].

In order to foster a culture and environment which supported rapid, independent, and innovative decision making – especially in their junior officers – the German Army adopted two useful components which characterized their training and leader development methodology which are applicable to the US Army today; incorporating an element of uncertainty in all training events, and decentralized training responsibility [59].

### **Incorporating Uncertainty into Training**

The German Army during the inter-war years envisioned the next war to be a war of movement. It would be fluid, fought with a high tempo, and would place enormous physical and mental demands on leaders and soldiers. Success would depend on the ability of leaders to accurately assess changing situations and rapidly seize opportunities at the expense of their

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opponents. In order to train their junior leaders to accomplish this, the Germans believed that training must incorporate a means to train the cognitive as well as the physical aspects of the leader. A vital component of this concept was the incorporation of uncertainty into virtually every training scenario. From their initial training as cadets through Staff College, leaders were presented with unexpected situations, varying conditions, and stress inducing challenges. They were then expected to assess, decide, and act accordingly – adjusting and adapting as the situation warranted. In order to make this training concept work, the Germans de-emphasized what is commonly called the “school solution.” The Germans believed that there was never just one correct way or “by the book” way to accomplish a task or mission. During post training assessments, junior leaders were evaluated not by “how” they executed the mission (unless it violated proven military concepts and resulted in high casualties), but whether the mission was accomplished successfully and if they could justify (explain) the means by which they executed it. In other words, junior leaders were expected to assess the problem or situation, devise a solution, carry it out with vigor, and then be able to articulate the reasoning behind the method chosen. In this way, leaders were taught to think and act on their own, without fear of undue scrutiny and criticism from their superiors.

The German Army incorporated this methodology into all forms of training, from tactical field exercises, tactical exercises without troops (TEWTS), written exams – a vital component of their education and promotion system, and especially leader situational decision making exercises – which the Germans placed enormous emphasis on during the period prior to Hitler’s unilateral revocation of the Versailles Treaty in 1933 [60].

We see manifestations of this concept evident at many of the US Army’s institutional training mechanisms such as the Combat Training Centers and TRADOC schools with their recent incorporation of COE variables into training scenarios. However, in order to maximize the benefit of this concept, it must also become an integral part of organizational and unit leader development training programs. Probably the easiest and least resource dependent means to accomplish this is by increased use of Tactical Decision Exercises (TDXs).

Again, an excellent example of the use and value of TDXs or Tactical Decision Games (TDGs) is the pre-WWII German/Prussian model. From the very beginning of a German officer’s education, TDGs were used to hone decision-making and to provide a basis for

evaluating their character. TDGs were fully integrated into and played a vital role in their education process. German cadets were required to solve problems with many variables under different conditions and then explain their decisions to the instructor and class. Cadets were given problems that were complex and dealt with units three levels above his own (in the case of cadets, platoon = company, battalion, and regiments). Instructors used the TDG to determine what the cadet would do when presented with a multifaceted problem. They were not concerned with what the cadet had already learned, but with the cadet's willingness to present and solve the problem. These scenarios were timed, usually limited, which increased the stress. When time was up, the cadet presented his solution to instructors, peers and sometimes visiting officers. They were evaluated on their decision-making ability, not how the tasks were accomplished.

TDGs were used to introduce cadets to the unknown, with the belief that cadets would want to know more and ask questions or find out for themselves what they did not know. The TDG was also used as part of a cadet's evaluation. Weak performance on graded TDGs was grounds for exam failure or for expulsion from the school. The inability to make a decision or defend one's decision in the face of adversity was grounds for not being commissioned [61]. Fully embracing the merits of TDGs, the Germans embedded this methodology into unit collective and even senior officer training as well.

In the Army's quest for "Pentathlete" developmental tools, the use of TDGs/TDXs provides commanders and instructors an efficient (minimal resources required) and effective way to develop superior decision-making skills in leaders – at all levels. The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), with its enormous repository of historical and contemporary records, could develop a scenario library, making them available to assist commanders and instructors in the creation of TDGs/TDXs. Officers would be encouraged to contribute scenarios to the library based on their own personal experiences.

Although this particular initiative encompasses institutional elements with the incorporation of TDGs into formal school POIs and a scenario library, the central proposal is for commanders to embrace and use TDGs/TDXs as a valuable component to organizational leader development programs.

## **Decentralized Training Responsibility**

The resultant goal for developing “Pentathletes” is to create leaders who are capable of rapid and effectual decision-making, who display mental agility, and are confident in their own as well as their unit’s abilities. An available instrument to assist commanders in developing these traits is to reemphasize the “mind-set” and application of junior officer responsibility for planning, resourcing, and execution of unit training. As an Army, we appear to have moved away from this.

During interviews and discussions with several hundred veterans of OIF, OEF, and operations in the Balkans conducted at Fort Benning and Fort Leavenworth in November 2006, approximately 75% of junior leaders were of the opinion that they enjoyed a much greater level of autonomy, freedom of action, and sense of overall responsibility for their unit, its Soldiers, and execution of mission parameters while deployed than during normal home station garrison activities and training. This dynamic was particularly evident in combat arms units – with the exception of special operations and “elite” units such as 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Officers described a dynamic where although their commanders often advocated the concepts of decentralized operations, junior leader initiative, innovation, open discussion and dialogue; they were seldom applied or encouraged during actual execution – especially with regard to training.

Training was characterized by centralized planning, centralized control, centralized execution, and centralized external assessment. Former platoon leaders and company commanders felt that they had little say in the planning, resourcing, and execution of collective, and in many cases, individual training for their unit and its Soldiers. Depending on the level or complexity of the training, these functions were conducted at battalion, brigade, and sometimes division level. Training within their units followed this general pattern: Platoon leaders and company commanders were given their training tasks, told when and where the training would occur, show up at range or training area, and execute lane training – which was already designed and constructed. A leader, usually from another unit, would conduct the assessment and provide feedback. Leaders expressed that there was virtually never any “white space” on their calendars where they could plan and conduct activities of their own choosing. Interestingly, this scenario was less prevalent in combat support and combat service support units, where officers appeared

to have increased freedom of action to plan, resource, and execute training at their own discretion.

The centralized training management approach has many positive attributes to include cost and time efficiency, standardization, maximizing often scarce resources, and the ability of senior leaders to provide oversight – all of which may be required under certain conditions. However, in many circumstances it fails to take advantage of the many leader development opportunities inherent in a decentralized approach to training management and execution. Encouraging and allowing junior leaders to design, plan, resource, conduct, and assess unit and individual training promotes leader cognitive skills, but can also be a stimulus for innovation, promote the building of effective teams as leaders dialogue and solicit input from other members of the unit, and enhance the trust and confidence in the abilities of the junior leader – not only in himself but by his chain of command. Additionally, many of the functions associated with decentralized training – collaborative planning, coordination for resources, communicating plans and operations, working with outside personnel, and conducting post operation assessments and analysis are all activities that junior leaders are required to accomplish in operations in the COE.

When appropriate, providing junior leaders – especially company commanders – the opportunity to plan, conduct, and have primary responsibility for training his/her unit not only offers immediate benefits, but also affords the opportunity to train the next generation of field grade officers (operations officers, executive officers, battalion commanders) in how to effectively conduct unit level training. This was also proposed by the 2003 Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to The Army (ATLDP). The ATLDP recommended that more training time be given to company commanders and platoon leaders, providing them with more discretionary training opportunities. The study recommended returning to bottom-up versus top-down approach to training management [62].

### **Increase Time/Experience in Key Leader Development Positions**

As part of Major Donald E. Vandergriff's historical study and analysis of the Personnel Systems of other armies, he identified several attributes and characteristics that were consistently evident and applied to successful armies and were notably absent from unsuccessful ones. A typical attribute of successful armies was extensive emphasis and the corresponding commitment to education and leader development early in an officer's career. Generally,

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officers of successful armies were required to serve in the enlisted ranks anywhere from two to six years prior to selection as an officer candidate. Selection and accession into the officer corps was extremely competitive and tough, with as high as a 80% attrition rate – notably in the Finnish Army 1939-1940, the German Army 1809-1942, and the Israeli Army 1948-1973. In all cases, officers attended extensive military schooling up front, sometimes up to two years in duration. Once officers completed their initial education they served an initial tour with a regiment or unit as a platoon leader for three to five years and then as an adjutant or staff officer for an additional two years. Following this, a junior officer would be assigned away from the actual regiment as an instructor. After their first Regimental tour, officers would go into one of two tracks: line or general staff. After their first instructor tour, line officers, with generally up to and sometimes in excess of seven years experience, would return to the same regiment to serve on the battalion or regimental staff or to command a company. Company commanders would usually command for two to four years [63].

Thus, not only did the officer corps represent elements of the “best and brightest” of the society, but each “successful army” system demonstrated an enormous commitment to junior officer education, training, and applied leadership experience. Officers served in and gained invaluable experience in direct leadership positions (platoon leader and company commander) for a far longer period than is the norm in the US Army today. Additionally, officers assuming vital company command positions in “successful armies” were generally older, more mature, and possessed a greater breadth of experience – organizational management, tactical and operational knowledge, and leadership – than their counterparts in “unsuccessful armies.”

Contrast the junior officer developmental track of these studied “successful armies” with current conditions in the US Army. It is not uncommon for officers to spend less than 12 months – in some cases as little as six months – as platoon leaders before moving to company executive officer or battalion staff officer positions. The same dynamic exists with regard to the assignment of company commanders. It is becoming more and more prevalent to see officers assuming company command positions at the three to five year mark in their career, and in some cases, prior to attending the Captain’s Career Course (CCC) [64]. This situation reduces the essential, critical, and foundational leader development opportunities and experiences that are

such an integral part of service as a platoon leader and as a resident student in the institutional Army.

The ATLDP study noted that many officers had not been properly developed at their current position before they are moved to the next higher position for which they have been neither educated nor trained [65]. Given the complexities, demands, and requirement for independent action by junior leaders which are characteristics of the COE, it would seem prudent and preferable for our junior leaders, most notably company commanders, to be as educated, experienced, and mature as possible.

Additionally, the ATLDP study identified the affects of this dynamic resulted in senior officers being more directive in their leadership and less tolerant of mistakes – both of which impact on leader development [66]. Although moving junior officers from position to position early in their careers may be necessary due to the operational pace, personnel shortages, or poor organizational management, unit commanders and the Army should limit this as much as possible. In order to build “Pentathletes” for the future, the Army and unit commanders should make every effort to protect and enhance junior officer leader development experiences. They must provide and ensure adequate time in key leadership positions jobs for the development of foundational skills and attributes, and time to provide quality educational and operational experiences. Providing the opportunities for quality leader development should be a fundamental consideration in personnel and assignment policies, especially at the organizational level.

#### Creating the “Pentathlete” - Changing the Army Culture – Ideas

#### **Cultural Impediments to Creating “Pentathletes”**

Culture is our set of subconscious assumptions; an organizations collective “state of mind” [67]. As such, today’s Army culture is in many cases at odds with programs, initiatives and ideas designed to foster and promote the development of “Pentathletes.” Cultural impediments can hinder initiatives; stifle dialogue, discourage innovative ideas, and potentially impact the long-term prospects of turning our young leaders into “Pentathletes.”

“America remains at war. This is one of the most dangerous times in our history. We retain the confidence of the Nation as we engage in a long struggle against global terrorism and the conditions that give it life and sustain it. Since 9-11, well over 700,000

active and reserve Soldiers have deployed in support of the war on terror. Today, almost 600,000 Soldiers are on active duty, serving in nearly 80 countries worldwide. While fighting, we are continuing to prepare our Soldiers, leaders, families, civilians, and forces for the challenges they will face. Our commitment to current and future readiness in the face of uncertainty is driving how we are transforming; modernizing; and realigning our entire global infrastructure of bases, depots, arsenals, and equipment sets” [68].

This statement by General Peter J. Schoomaker and Secretary of the Army, Francis J. Harvey in the 2007 Posture of The United States Army reflects an organization “bursting at the seams” with activity. The Army is simultaneously prosecuting a far-reaching and open-ended war, transforming and realigning its force structure, fielding new systems and equipment, and attempting to ensure the viability of the all-volunteer force. In short...the Army is busy! As an Army at War, commanders and leaders have current real world obligations and requirements that must be met. They must balance these current needs and obligations with the desire to institute changes intended to support “Pentathlete” development. Unfortunately, in many cases they may not be complimentary.

Although most leaders understand the need and desire to develop future “Pentathletes,” it may take a back-seat to present obligations. “When the Army vetted the idea of Transformation with the combatant commanders four years ago, most acknowledged the need for change. Many also stated, however, that their near-term requirement was for another heavy division” [69]. These commanders were more concerned about their current capabilities than how the force would look and operate in 20 years. This dynamic, at all levels, has the potential to limit the scope, sustainability, and even the long-term feasibility of any initiative designed in support of the “Pentathlete” concept.

Modern land warfare is one of the most complex undertakings imaginable [70]. Mastering its many facets requires considerable intellect and an enormous variety of skills and talents. The complexity of land warfare makes it extremely difficult to estimate the second and third order effects of any one action. This same situation exists with regard to many of the programs and initiatives associated with developing “Pentathletes.” As the Army leadership inculcates the concept of “Pentathlete” leaders into our force lexicon and Leader Development Programs (LDPs), an effort must be made to understand the comprehensive affect of this change as it applies to our doctrine, organizations, training, material, leadership and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF). “Pentathlete” motivated changes, as a component of one of the

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DOTMLPF imperatives, may have an affect – possibly undesired – on another or several other imperatives. Most senior leaders in the Army understand this and hence view significant change with care [71]. Once again, this may potentially impact programs, initiatives and concepts designed to create “Pentathletes.”

In order for the Army to effectively function, we rely on numerous processes to assist us in managing its many complexities. “Process is important, but excessive focus on process versus product significantly impedes innovation” [72]. Examples include the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) with its emphasis on “how to think” vice “what to think,” human resource policies that manage people as inputs rather than outputs, and reporting and briefing practices that focus more on things than on ideas [73]. Processes such as these are so ingrained into the Army culture, that supplanting them with alternative “Pentathlete” driven ideas may be very challenging.

The Army has an extraordinary record of success, particularly in the post-Vietnam era, and is universally regarded as the finest army in the world. The Army, as an institution, continues to be held in the highest regard by the American people. This is directly attributed to its leadership and demonstrated proficiency executing a myriad of assigned tasks over the past 25 years; from conventional warfighting, peace keeping, humanitarian assistance, crisis response, and now counter-insurgency and nation building. In short, the Army has a remarkable and noted record of success. Although the Army did suffer several “black eyes” during this same period (i.e. Somalia, failure to plan phase IV of Cobra II – which was not entirely an Army failure, the Abu-ghraib prisoner abuse incidents and demonstrated leadership failings, the Pat Tillman friendly fire incident and perceived cover-up, etc.), as an institution, the Army’s reputation remains extremely high. The high marks that our customers – the American people – give us are a reflection of the culture, values, and quality of the people and leaders that make up and represent the Army.

Clayton M. Christensen describes in his book, *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, that many civilian corporations fail to stay atop their field when confronted with disruptive market and technological change. They find it difficult and fundamentally counterintuitive to change their methods, framework, and way of doing business at the height of their apparent success [74]. In other words, “why fix what ain’t broke.” This same dynamic may potentially impact on the

Army's ability to develop, initiate, and most importantly, gain the long-term support of leaders for "Pentathlete" initiatives. During interviews and discussions with numerous Army leaders, comments such as these were quite common: "The Army already has the tools, education opportunities, and leader development programs that create "multi-skilled officers" or "The Pentathlete concept is nothing new...just another way to say what we already have and are doing" [75].

Although the population group interviewed was relatively small in comparison to the overall force, it does provide an indication that the "Pentathlete" concept is not universally viewed as something new. It provides an indication that efforts to transform current programs or look for new and innovative approaches to developing adaptive leaders may not be fully embraced.

### **Changing the Army Culture**

"No amount of blue ribbon panels, chain teaching or "innovative activity reports" will change culture. Behavior drives culture. To change culture, we must change behavior" [76].

This statement hits right at the heart of what is required of Army leaders – we must demonstrate by our behavior and actions that we are willing to take the necessary measures, even if it means short-term sacrifices, in order to adapt and make our culture fully supportive for developing "Pentathletes" for the future force.

The ATLDP Officer Study identified that the Army culture is out of balance. It noted that there was friction between Army beliefs and practices. The Army culture was considered healthy when there was demonstrated trust that stated beliefs equate to actual practices. Such a balance was deemed vital to the overall welfare and effectiveness of the force. The study called this the Band of Tolerance. The study stated that officers understood and accepted that there would be imperfections in the stated beliefs and practices caused by unusual circumstances, but officers expressed "strong and passionate feelings that the Army Culture was outside this Band of Tolerance" [77]. Figure 2 depicts the Army Culture outside the Band of Tolerance.

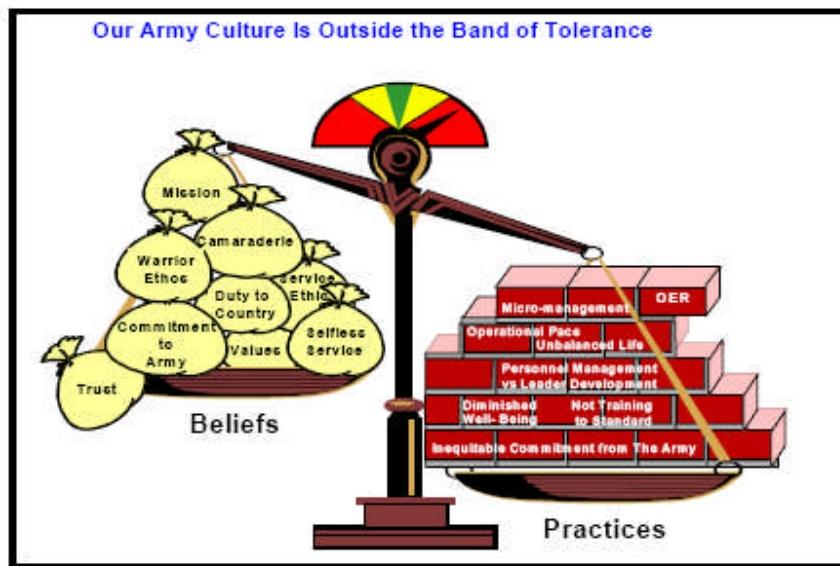


Figure 2. Army Culture – Outside the Band of Tolerance.

#### *ATLDP Officer Study Report Summary*

The following summarizes the findings of the ATLDP Officer Study Report:

- Undisciplined operational pace affects every facet of Army life.
- The Army expects greater commitment from officers and families than it provides.
- Junior officers are not receiving adequate leader development experiences; this will show up in the future as they become battalion and brigade commanders who don't know what "right" looks like.
- Micromanagement is perceived to be pervasive. The perception is that this lack of trust stems from the leader's desire to be invulnerable to criticism and blocks leader development opportunities for junior leaders.
- Contact between senior leaders and subordinates has diminished.
- Most officers have not fully embraced the current OER; they are turned off by jargon such as "center of mass" and other terms. Senior raters perceived as continuing to game the system and don't provide useful, honest or timely feedback on their ratings. The OER is a source of mistrust and anxiety.
- Personnel management drives the system instead of quality development experiences.

- Officer Education System does not provide full spectrum development experiences.
- The Combat Training Centers (CTC's) are great, essential.
- The Training doctrine is sound, but must be adapted to changing strategic environments.
- Units cannot execute home station training in accordance with Army doctrine/standards due to non-mission taskings, excessive OPTEMPO, and shortage of training resources.
- The majority of officers report they have no mentors, though most believe mentoring is important to leader development.
- Adaptability and Self-awareness are the foundation of lifelong learning, but self-awareness requires feedback, but feedback loops are weak or non-existent.
- The Army needs to integrate training and leader development, no current models or doctrine for doing so.
- Retention is a significant issue across three officer cohorts (LTs, CPTs and MAJs, LTCs and COLs). This is attributed to:
  - lack of commitment from the Army;
  - limitations on spouse employment;
  - perceived imbalance between Army expectations and the family;
  - work unpredictability;
  - limited control over assignments.

To move ahead and address these real or perceived notions, the Army must be willing to challenge and change everything: Culture Change [78].

After the ATLDP study findings were released in 2001, the Army leadership implemented many directives, programs, and initiatives designed to mitigate some of these deficiencies. However, today our junior leaders continue to have many, if not all, of these same perceptions. [79] Many of these same findings, especially in the leader development realm, were still evident in the Review of Education, Training, and Assignment for Leaders (RETAL) Task Force Officer Team Report which was released in June 2006 [80].

In order to change the disparity between the perceived beliefs and practices that exist in the Army Culture, as it relates to developing “Pentathletes,” the Army should re-focus its effort and continue to emphasize improvements in the following areas: the Army Service Ethic,

operational pace, micromanagement, personnel management versus leader development, and mentoring.

### **Army Service Ethic**

The ATLDP study noted that officers possessed a strong belief in the foundations of the Army Service Ethic: pride in the profession of arms, commitment to the Army and its values, belief in the essential purpose of the military, and patriotism. However, the Army's Service Ethic and concept of Officership were neither well-understood nor clearly defined, and not reinforced throughout an officer's career [81]. This was especially true with regard to our junior officers. As an officer or leader progresses through his/her career, they naturally become more cognizant of and come to embrace the special nature and uniqueness associated with membership in the profession of arms. They realize that the values, traditions, concepts of service to the nation and others, and pride associated with being a member of a valued team are all elements that separate them, for the most part, from the citizens of the society for whom they serve. The majority of Army leaders, over time, realize that they are a part of something truly "special." A life spent serving the nation as an Army leader will be full of many tremendous and varied experiences; shared with wonderful people, offering enormous opportunities for personal and professional growth, providing numerous opportunities to test and challenge, and will endow a person with a sense that they are a part of something bigger than just themselves. They are serving as a member of a highly skilled, valued and respected team which conducts our nation's bidding.

But, at the same time, service as an Army leader often requires enormous sacrifice, both personally and family related. Deployments and training exercises which often necessitate lengthy separations from family, working long hours, frequent moves, limited opportunities for spouse employment – these are all elements which impact on leader and family quality of life.

The full richness of a career as an Army leader is not readily apparent to leaders early in their career. Their initial years are frenetic; school, initial entry training, first assignment to a unit, learning to become an effective leader, training, preparation for deployment, deployment, recovery, deployment again, more school training – in house and distance learning, new leadership responsibilities, etc. During these early years, there is little time for reflection. As a result, many junior leaders fail to understand where this "seemingly never-ending work

template” will take them and the long-term benefits and richness associated with it. In order to gain the full support and commitment of junior leaders to a life of service and everything required to become a “Pentathlete,” the Army and its leaders – at all levels, must educate, promote, and continuously accentuate the positive aspects and rewards associated with leading the life of a Army Leader and Warrior.

### **Operational Pace**

The ATLD Study identified excessive operational pace as a major source of the degradation in the quality of training and leader development. Since 2001, when the survey was conducted, the operational pace has only accelerated; further straining training and leader development opportunities. In order to meet the current operational requirements and demands, the Army has been forced to adjust, modify, and in some cases cut short previously practiced methods of training and leader development norms throughout the force. Examples include; minimizing time in critical leader development positions, assuming company command positions prior to attendance to the CCC, limited opportunities for junior leaders to plan, execute and evaluate unit collective training, increased micromanagement from leaders, adjusting school POIs to focus curriculums on current operational requirements as opposed to a broad-based education, and limiting time for self-education.

Given the Army’s current operational demands, coupled with our limited and strained force structure, this condition is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future. However, the Army must acknowledge this dynamic, temper its near-term expectations for implementation of “Pentathlete” programs and initiatives, and convey to Army leaders that developing “Pentathletes” will not occur overnight. It will take many years and potentially several generations of Army leaders to bring this concept to fruition. It will be a long process, accomplished incrementally throughout a leader’s career – when opportunities and time avail.

### **Micromanagement**

“Micromanagement has become part of the Army Culture. There is a growing perception that lack of trust stems from the leader’s desire to be invulnerable to criticism and block the opportunity for subordinates to learn through leadership experience. This is in part a direct result of the rank imbalance at company grade level. Many officers have not been properly developed

at their current level or position before they move to a higher position for which they have been neither educated nor trained. Inexperienced officers, a high operational pace, and associated high standards or achievement encourage senior officers to be more directive in their leadership and less tolerant of mistakes. These practices impact directly on leader development” [82].

This assessment by the ATLD Panel depicts a situation whereby junior leaders are thrust into an ever increasingly complex operational environment which places enormous demands on them; taxing their maturity, decision making ability, judgment, and requiring a wide range of personal and professional skills not ordinarily resident or expected in a leader of such limited experience. This results in senior leaders asserting a more directive, hands-on, micromanagement approach to leadership in order to mitigate the potential risky effects of this situation. Given these circumstances, senior leaders who exercise greater assertiveness and directive control over subordinates may seem natural and prudent, especially in high risk environments where Soldier lives’ and welfare may be at stake. But, it should be noted that there is a cost associated with this.

First, micromanagement and directive control limit opportunities for personal and professional development that naturally arise from having authority commensurate with responsibility. Giving junior leaders responsibilities associated with leading, training, managing, and caring for Soldiers and their unit, and then limiting their authority or directing the methods by which this will be accomplished stifles thought, creativity, initiative, flexibility, as well as overall job satisfaction and sense of self-worth. All of which are components of the “Pentathlete.”

Second, as leaders exercise directive control and micromanagement techniques, especially if they work, they become ingrained as the normal, customary, and preferred method of leadership. As is often prophesized “we are all prisoners of our own experiences.” Leaders who micromanage may continue to do so as they move to successive higher leadership positions. Junior leaders, many having experienced only this style of leadership, are susceptible to exercising a similar approach. Thus, the cycle will continue.

Even though virtually every leadership manual and senior Army leader decries micromanagement and directive control techniques, it appears they are still practiced. The Army

must focus renewed effort to stem this. Senior Army leaders, from the CSA on down, must promote and demonstrate alternative techniques. Leadership training in schools must teach and demonstrate different techniques, with practical examples and vignettes. Although there may be circumstances where directive control techniques are necessary, it must be emphasized, over and over again, its potential costs and pitfalls. Most importantly, leaders must practice what they preach. Leaders must demonstrate, by their collective behavior, trust and confidence in junior leaders by granting them the authority to accomplish the tasks/missions they are given free of undue and potentially stifling direction and scrutiny. This will result in a system that will produce a corps of confident, innovative, flexible, and trusted leaders who are capable of successfully meeting any challenge.

### **Personnel Management Versus Leader Development**

“Assignment requirements, instead of individual leader development needs, drive officer personnel management. DA Pam 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management*, focuses on career gates rather than the quality of developmental experiences. Assignment officers make assignments on quotas to fill spaces rather than leader development. The Army assignment system is driven by requirements to fill spaces rather than quality leader development. Officers and field commanders have little say in the current process” [83].

These findings by the ATLD Panel clearly describe a situation that most mid-grade and senior Army officers are familiar with. For many officers, the assignment process; what drives it, how assignments are determined, and parceled out is a complete mystery. It seems as if personnel managers have a large dart board marked with required assignments and then toss darts, with names on them, to see who fills them – often with little regard to the particular officer’s skills, professional needs, or personal desires. Obviously, this is a fallacy, as there is a considerable amount of consideration given to each assignment. But, as the Army’s soaring operational commitments continue, assignments “for the needs of the Army” are becoming paramount – rightfully so, and will continue unabated for quite awhile.

Even though priority positions and fill in units and headquarters in support of operational commitments should and will have priority for the foreseeable future, there are various initiatives the Army should consider to posture the personnel management system for future success and enhance “Pentathlete” development when the “train does slow down.”

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*Revise DA Pam 600-3*

DA PAM 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management*, governs leader development; providing requirements for advancement – education, positions, timelines, etc. It provides branch specific baseline models (i.e. gates that must be met) for successful pursuit of an Army career. Although useful, as a start point, for identifying key and required officer developmental positions, DA PAM 600-3 fails to identify objective criteria for “qualification” in each developmental position. Officers are required to serve in a position for a period of time (12 months as a company commander) and then they are deemed “qualified” and eligible to move to the next gate.

Unfortunately, not all assignments offer the same opportunities for professional development. Some officers may have command and staff opportunities which include numerous training exercises and operational deployments while others may fill positions during periods of recovery, re-set, or routine garrison activity. Not to down play any of these events as they all offer their own unique challenges and provide leader development opportunities, but they serve to illustrate that critical “command and staff time” and the experience, knowledge, and development they provide are not always equal. With a time based system, the Army runs the risk of “qualifying” officers in certain positions, allowing them to move to the next gate – with accompanying greater responsibility, without the requisite experience or skills to perform at the next higher level.

In order to mitigate this, the Army should consider revising DA PAM 600-3, establishing specific objective, qualitative standards for branch qualification at lieutenant, captain, and major based on operational or training experiences, rather than just months assigned. Additionally, baseline guidelines articulating performance standards (by branch, functional area, and rank) should be included. This ties directly into the leader development process as standards are the basis for assessment, feedback, and corrective action. “The Army is a standards-based organization, and yet it has little in the way of objective criteria with which to assess officer performance” [84].

With the creation of the “Pentathlete” concept, which represents the ideal Army Leader of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, its encompassing skills and attributes should be embedded into the leader development model. Specific requirements or goals that support “Pentathlete” development

should be addressed, by grade, position, and time. For example, prior to serving as a battalion operation or executive officer, an officer must pass Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) Level 1 in a foreign language. In this manner, the Army would have a measurable matrix based on solid objectives to monitor and guide the corps through the professional development process.

#### *Revise the Assignment Process*

The current assignment process is very centralized. Unit commanders have very little influence on officer assignments – other than remarks on an OER. This deprives assignment officers of a very valuable tool to assist them in ensuring that the right officers are placed in positions that meet Army requirements but also enhance specific individual leader development needs. Unit commanders can offer a much clearer assessment of an officer’s strengths, weaknesses, personal and professional desires, and developmental needs, than remote assignment officers.

The officer assignment process should be revised to incorporate a mechanism by which unit commanders are required to provide specific input into the subsequent assignments of officers under their command. This may include a listing of specific skills and attributes, strengths and weaknesses, and recommended future positions – all designed to provide information to assist assignment officers in placing officers in positions which promote and enhance professional development. This must be in greater detail and more specific than the input now annotated on the current OER. To further enhance this process, open dialogue and discussion between assignment officers and unit commanders concerning future assignments should also be encouraged, if not mandated.

#### *Senior Officer Freedom to Choose His/Her Team*

During the period prior to and during the Second World War, the German and American Armies had an acknowledged and informal process where senior officers had considerable influence on the selection and assignment of officers that would serve with them, wherever they went. When an officer was promoted or given a new command, he often took “his folks” or select members of his command and staff with him. This promoted exceptional efficiency, continuity, reduced turmoil, and allowed commanders more time and greater freedom to focus on other issues rather than staff and leader retraining.

The Army should explore options to allow greater freedom for senior officers to recruit, select, and build his/her team of leaders when assigned to a new position. Not only would units and Soldiers benefit from less initial turmoil as new leaders – who would be familiar with each other, are integrated into a unit, but senior officers would continue monitoring, assessing and developing junior leaders for a consistent sustained period of time.

#### *Permanent Long-standing Assignment Officers*

The British and Australian Army's employ a significantly different approach with regard to the selection and stationing of assignment officers/managers compared to the US Army. The British and Australians hire permanent, long-standing assignment officers to manage officer assignments. These are not just senior advisors to oversee personnel directorates, but actual assignment officers...the gentlemen at the other end of the phone. These are usually retired senior grade officers (former LTCs, COLs and in some cases GOs), who are experts in leader development and the critical role the assignment process plays as part of it. They are trained, fully knowledgeable of the system, stay in-tune to trends, implement guidance and directives, and guide officers throughout their careers. Because of their previous experience in the Army and long-standing tenure as an assignment officer, they are able to become more familiar and knowledgeable with regard to their officer "cliental" on a more personal level than their American counterpart. This familiarity allows them to monitor their development process, provide guidance and advice, and select assignments that best meet the needs of the service and the specific officer. This process is further enhanced by the fact that these assignment officers are no longer in the active service. They can provide a source of candid advice and guidance outside the normal chain of command [85].

This is in sharp contrast to the US Army system. Although Army assignment officers are dedicated professionals and well trained in their craft, in most cases they do not possess the requisite experience, knowledge, or seniority to provide guidance and advice to other officers. In most instances, assignment officers are of the same rank, or lesser rank, than the officers they are assigned to manage. For the most part, officers must rely on officers outside the personnel management branch to provide advice and guidance on assignments and leader development opportunities. Unfortunately, officers outside the personnel management branch may not be in tune to the latest guidance, directives, or their perspective may be tainted by their experiences.

The goal of the “Pentathlete” concept is to create a multi-skilled, well-rounded leader capable of functioning in any environment. Creating this type of leader requires a comprehensive career-long professional development model. In order to manage and guide officers through this model, the Army should consider a system similar to the British and Australian – establishing permanent long-standing assignment managers.

### **Mentoring and Counseling**

It is generally acknowledged that a vital component to an effective leader development program includes a mechanism whereby junior officers receive regular counseling, feedback and mentoring from senior leaders. However, even with the DA mandated, and OER annotated requirement for counseling, over 75% of the officer’s surveyed stated that they received very little [86]. Notable exceptions to this dynamic came from officers who served in the Ranger Regiment. In their case, counseling, mentoring and particularly effective Officer Professional Development (OPD) sessions – both on leader development and traditional warfighting subjects, were the norm. This was attributed to the fact that commanders and senior staff who served in the Regiment had previously served in similar positions in another unit before. Thus, they possessed greater experience and had the benefit of implementing lessons learned from previous assignments. How many times have we heard from former commanders – “if I had to do it all over again...I would spend more time talking, developing, and mentoring my platoon leaders and company commanders?” These officers were given that opportunity and appeared to take advantage of it.

Although the Army has made a concerted effort to encourage – and in some cases mandating, senior leaders to counsel and mentor subordinates, indications are that it is still not the norm. The new Army leadership manual, FM 6-22, *Army Leadership – Confident, Competent and Agile* (October 2006), provides a very detailed and excellent tutorial on counseling. It provides the guidance and textbook tools to assist leaders in the conduct of effective counseling. What is missing, however, is active teaching. Junior leaders should be taught throughout the officer education system, so they understand what mentoring and counseling is and how it should be conducted. This process will perpetuate itself as junior officers’ rise in rank. Not only will they understand the requirement to counsel and mentor, but they will possess the ways and means to conduct it. Additional emphasis and instruction should

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be placed in Pre-Command Courses so in-coming battalion and brigade commanders understand Army doctrine, their role in counseling and mentoring, and the expectations of officers they will lead. Actual simulated counseling sessions with trained professionals would be of tremendous benefit as part of this training.

Once again, it comes down to leading by example. As officers become more comfortable conducting counseling and mentoring sessions, its regularity will increase. Junior officers will experience increased personal exposure to senior officers, opening up channels for dialogue, discussion, and the inevitable personal and professional growth that result from it.

### Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal

#### **Characteristics of Successful Combat Leaders**

In his 1962 parting address at West Point, General Douglas MacArthur said that the mission of Army officers was to “win our wars” [87]. To put it even more directly, the ultimate functional role of any armed force is to engage in combat. For this reason, successful leadership in combat should be the aim of the system used to develop, train and manage officers’ careers in any army, and the production of combat leaders must be the central goal of that system [88]. Although the purpose of this paper is not to question the relevancy of the “Pentathlete” concept, the CSA’s vision of future Army Leaders appears to place greater emphasis on the skills associated with diplomacy, management, and statesmanship, than combat leadership. If we lose sight of the requirement to develop combat leaders, “nothing else will matter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our Army will become irrelevant at best and disavowed at worst” [89]. Although this statement is probably a bit extreme, it does represent a fundamental issue to the Army concerning how to instill and then sustain the warrior spirit (if it can be done) while enhancing the non-warfighting aspects of the “Pentathlete” model.

It may be argued that the nature and characteristics of warfare has forever changed, especially any future conflict in which the United States may be involved in, I feel it is prudent to address, for reference and comparison, the historical character traits of successful combat leaders.

In 1983, at the request of the Officer Personnel Management (OPMS) Study Group, a team of seven military history instructors at the US Military Academy was formed to conduct a

study to determine the trends and characteristics of successful combat leadership that should be institutionalized in the development of US Army officers. The USMA Study Group examined over 200 American and foreign examples of combat leadership. These included incidents in warfare throughout recorded history, from all areas of the world. Examples were gathered from all wars involving the US from the American Revolution through Vietnam.

In the course of the study, the team searched for and analyzed examples of successful and unsuccessful combat actions, seeking answers to two specific questions: What were the characteristics of leadership in successful combat actions and how have they differed from those traits observed in unsuccessful actions, and what personal, experiential, and institutional factors appear to have contributed to developing individuals into successful or unsuccessful leaders in combat?

The only restrictive criteria initially imposed were that the examples must be actions in actual combat and that the incident must involve leadership, not management. The sole focus of the study was on combat leadership.

The USMA Study Group found remarkable consistency among successful combat leaders regardless of the historical period, country, or condition of combat. Early in their lives, the traits that made leaders successful were discernable in some form and were enhanced, but could not be induced, through experience. In no instance, did a unit in combat overcome the deficiencies of its leader. In almost all cases, successful leaders were able to overcome startling unit deficiencies and incredible problems in mission definition, enemy physical and moral strength, troop, training, and equipment obstacles, weather and terrain conditions, bad luck, poor timing, misinformation, unreliable superiors and subordinates, and their own anxieties [90].

There were five personal characteristics that were present in every case and disaster ensued in their absence. They were terrain sense, single-minded tenacity, ferocious audacity, physical confidence, and practical, practiced judgment.

#### *Terrain Sense*

Terrain sense refers to the ability to quickly, almost intuitively, tactically judge terrain. This was the most essential characteristic and improved the most through experience. The conduct of personal reconnaissance was vital to successful combat leaders, including repeated infiltration to view their own position from an enemy perspective. The successful combat leader

had a keen understanding of not only the technical appreciation and application of the terrain, but the ability to see the landscape and visualize the battle and how those weapons would be used.

#### *Single-minded Tenacity*

The successful leader had a particular facility for planning in detail, assessing a changing situation, and continually assimilating large quantities of conflicting data. Successful leaders required aggressiveness, audacity, and vigorous execution from their subordinates, and both they and their soldiers refused to accept defeat (Single-minded tenacity). Typical of all successful leaders was not an inflexible pursuit plan or even an objective, but rather an imaginative, driving intensity to accomplish the mission using everything that was available. They and their units continued with their mission in spite of casualties, wounds, lost equipment, and shortage of supplies. Successful leaders displayed an absolute refusal to surrender; more often surrender as an option simply did not occur to the commander. This was almost always tied to an unusually strong sense of moral courage and scrupulously ethical conduct in all regarding combat or warfare.

#### *Audacity*

“Leading by example” almost always invariably characterized the “leadership style” of the successful combat leader. He was usually cool under fire and seldom showed any indication of inner fears or doubts. This imperturbability had a substantial steadyng affect on units led by successful combat leaders, for many of the combat actions mention how the soldiers of the unit watched the “old man” for indications that everything was going according to plan – if he showed signs of breaking, the unit often disintegrated quickly [91]. Audacity or the willingness to take reasoned but enormous risks was always present. Frequently, successful commanders would say it was the only thing they could do. In many cases, their actions looked more like inspired desperation. This was closely linked to their own self-image. They invariably displayed a feeling of certitude about themselves and their mission. Self-doubt was a rare thing, almost never regarding previous decisions, and never revealed to even the closest subordinates.

#### *Physical Confidence*

The units commanded by successful leaders keyed on the leader and took on the leader’s confidence and spirit. It was clear that the leader was the most decisive factor in building unit cohesion and tactical success. The common Army maxim that “the commander is responsible

for everything his unit does or fails to do" was found to be literally correct in historical terms. Units depended on the commander for its spirit, its drive, and its direction. When the commander was decisive, vigorous, and in control, the unit usually succeeded; when he was unsure, inactive, and inept, the unit often failed [92].

The positive self image was probably a product of, or at least enhanced by, the individuals physical fitness and good health. Vigorous, demanding physical activity was either a part of regular duties or as a past time. Athletic ability was not as important as was the sense of physical well-being and the self confidence engendered by regular physical activity regardless of age. Physical confidence also enhanced the self-image and the projected image of a successful combat leader [93].

#### *Practical, Practiced Judgment*

One of the most uncommon of virtues, common sense, was always present in the successful combat leader. This was marked by an ability to determine the important from the unimportant, the immediate from the casual, the truth from deception, whether deliberate or accidental. The display of practiced, practical judgment was improved by experience, but as with all other critical characteristics, was discernible at an early age [94]. The study identified that the characteristics commonly considered and valued as part of a typical US Army leader's character – strong religious conviction and emotional attachment to soldiers – were not vital to successful combat leadership.

#### *Implications to Officer Professional Development*

The USMA Study Group identified some very interesting and important considerations and implications pertaining to Officer Professional Development:

- Some individuals appeared to be "born leaders," while other individuals developed into leaders, but a solid foundation of "character" was essential in any successful leader. That is, there appeared to be an aggregate of qualities in an individual's makeup, particularly those concerning his integrity and ethical foundation which were absolutely essential in the potential leader, and which could not be added through schooling or experience.

- The qualities of an individual's personality which set him apart from other men and made him a leader in which soldiers would follow were probably present, to one degree or another, at every point in a successful combat leader's career, with only an evolutionary change

over time. The essential qualities of personality which make a General Officer a successful leader in combat are discernible, if less developed, early in his career.

**- A variety of assignments in areas unrelated to troop leadership had little effect on the abilities of a combat leader.** Successful performance on high level staffs and in "high visibility" assignments were not effective gauges of successful leaders. Officers can be extremely successful in a variety of demanding assignments unrelated to leading soldiers in combat and be abject failures as combat leaders.

- Native good judgment, or "common sense," is an absolute requirement for successful combat leadership. The ability to perform well in formal schooling, while not a negative characteristic, is a less important factor for a combat leader. In particular, the leader must have a well-developed and practiced ability in making decisions under pressure.

- Successful combat leadership at one level of command is not a solid guarantee of success at higher levels. If, however, failure at a lower level is attributable to the individual's failings as a leader, it may be an indicator of likely failure at higher levels.

- Physical fitness and good health are prerequisites for successful command at every level.

**- Solid grounding in leadership early in service is required for later success.**

- Technical competence is important for any combat leader; however, technical skills per se are not as important for a combat leader as is an appreciation of the capabilities of all the technological devices at his command.

- Short assignments in succession were negative factors.

**- Officers who had avoided service with troops were generally not successful as combat leaders.**

**- The most salient predictor of a successful combat leader was successful leadership in peacetime, particularly of a tactical unit.** Longer service before combat with the unit he would lead in combat appeared to improve his performance, probably by increasing unit cohesion and improving mutual trust between the leader and the unit [95].

As mentioned previously, the USMA Study Group found remarkable consistency in the validity of these precepts throughout its historical study including analysis of leaders in virtually every type of armed conflict – to include counter-insurgency operations. As the Army moves

forward with concepts, programs, and initiatives for developing a “new” type of Army Leader for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, I think it would be extremely prudent for Army Leaders to keep these findings in mind and not stray too far from these time-tested principles and attributes of successful combat leaders.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

For the past ten years, the Army has been enamored with change. Our collective conscious and culture has been filled with the need to transform, change paradigms, develop new methods, realign the force, digitize, adapt, and so on. The Army is incorporating and embracing change at a pace and scope without precedent in its history. This includes defining and initiating programs to develop a new type of leader for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – “The Pentathlete.”

An Army comprised of “Pentathlete” leaders is a worthy and arguably essential goal, given the nature of likely Army missions and commitments in the future. The “Pentathlete” represents more than just a well-rounded leader. It represents a fundamental and extensive expansion of the skills, attributes, and competencies of Army leaders. No longer will it be enough to be just a warrior – now, a leader must also be a warrior, statesman, and manager. Creating leaders in the future who possess such a broad range of skills and attributes will not be easy. It will require considerable effort, a tremendous commitment, and above all else, time and “staying power.”

We must avoid the concept of **“Pentathlete Leader” becoming just another catchphrase or slogan** in an Army that is extremely fond of them. It must represent a specific model that is fixed to clearly defined methods for achieving it. Effective leaders and quality leadership have always been the foundation of and defining characteristic of the Army as an institution. The “Pentathlete” model defines what an Army leader should look like – it is the end-state. Given this, the Army’s Leader Development Program (LDP) should be structured to develop the skills, attributes, and competencies of the “Pentathlete.”

As conveyed throughout this paper, there are many ideas, programs, and initiatives that, if implemented, may support components of the “Pentathlete” concept. The Army is already considering or implementing some of these. However, they are, in most cases, isolated and not related. They are not part of an all-encompassing LDP designed to support “Pentathlete” development. With the “Pentathlete” leader as the end-state or objective, the Army must develop

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a comprehensive LDP designed to create these skills, attributes and competencies. The desired ***skills, attributes, and competencies of a “Pentathlete” must be clearly defined***, by specific grade or experience level, and then tied to specific, measurable objectives designed to achieve them. In other words, the Army must create a road-map to direct, guide, and assist the force through the leader development process. ***DA PAM 600-3, Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management must be revised***, using the “Pentathlete” concept as its base. Leaders and institutions must have a clear understanding of what a “Pentathlete” leader is and what is required to become one.

Once the “Pentathlete” driven LDP is clearly defined, it must be ***universally understood, accepted, and supported***. Specific programs, directives and regulations must be institutionalized to ensure the long-term survival of the concept. Without an overarching documented strategy that supports “Pentathlete” development, the concept could and most probably will “lose its legs.” The Army is fully engaged and committed; prosecuting a war, transforming, fighting monetary issues, realigning, redefining doctrine, and changing senior leaders. All have the potential to overshadow and influence the desire and need to create “Pentathletes.”

If the quality of an Army is truly a function of and reflection of its leadership, ***the “Pentathlete” concept, and all that it entails, must become preeminent in the Army’s Way Ahead.***

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